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C O P Y
O F A
L E T T E R

Sent by

Mr. *Luke Ryley*, *Executed* *October*

Soon after His Condemnation,

TO THE

Lundene
Arch P-A-r of Great B---n.

TOGETHER

With That in which it was inclosed and
directed to a FRIEND.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *J. Webb*, near *St. Paul's*,

M,DCC,XLIV.

[Price Six-Pence.]

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TO THE
READER.

I Need not trouble you with the Accident which put the two following Letters into my Possession, as it is no Way entertaining; 'tis sufficient to assure you that I have printed them without any Alteration. When I had myself read them, they gave me the Curiosity to enquire into the Life and Character of the Writer, as I thought, by his Style, he must have been well educated, and possibly, as he himself says, born a Gentleman; however, to me, it was evident that he could not be, as most Street-robbers are, of the very Dregs of the People.

UPON Enquiry I had the following Account given me, viz. That he was the Son of a Gentleman of Character and Fortune; that he had three Uncles who appeared in great Credit and Affluence, and had considerable Interest in the respective Countries in which they lived; that Mr. Luke Ryley himself had married the best Fortune in Drogheda; was settled in a considerable Farm; was easy, nay happy in his Circumstances, and had no Blemish in his Character, and so might have continued, had he not been seized with a Fit of groundless Jealousy, which had such an Effect upon him, that he resolved to abandon his Wife, and accordingly drove off, sold his Stock, and with Eight Hundred Pounds in his Pocket, came to London. Here he had the Misfortune to fall into Play, by which he was soon stripp'd of all his Money and reduced to the greatest Distress, not having saved one Penny to purchase Bread for his Servant, or even for himself, in a Country where he was an intire Stranger,

Stranger, and consequently could hope no Credit. How he came to engage in so low Villainy, I could not discover; and al that I know farther than the above (which is a genuine) Account, is from the Information given the Public by the Ordinary of Newgate; except this one Circumstance, which a Person of Veracity assured me she had from the Roman Catholick Priest, who assisted him to prepare for Death, viz That he was extremely penitent, and very composed, from the Time he received Sentence to that in which it was executed. He said nothing at the Time of his Death; neither did the said Priest know of any Paper he left behind him, and if he had left any, 'tis very probable he would have put it into his Hands, or have acquainted that reverend Gentleman, who is Chaplain to a foreign Minister, with it.

FROM the above Account, which I received from Gentlemen and People of Probity and Character, and from the following Letters, we may reasonably conclude that the Reverend Ordinary of New-
gate

gate was imposed upon in the Copy of a Letter which he has published at the End of the Account of the Behaviour, Confession, and Dying Words of the Malefactors, &c. For we cannot suppose that a Gentleman of his Distinction would publish a Fiction, if he himself thought it so; and as I don't find, he had any Opportunity to discover, by his conversation, the Genius or Capacity of Mr. Ryley, it was more easy to palm that Letter upon his Reverence; especially, if we consider how nearly both the Diction and Orthography resemble the Letters of such low Miscreants, as guilty of the same Crimes, had, before him, suffered, from the just Sentence of the Law, the same Punishment. But what is to me a Demonstration, of his Reverence the Ordinary having been imposed on, by that invidious Forgery, is the Character of that reverend Gentleman's Christian Charity and Justice. The Letter, (which no doubt, he had not Time maturely to consider) is evidently the Production of some Enemy to the unhappy
Man's

Man's Family, and calculated to represent him a poor illiterate Wretch, as low in Birth and Education, as he shewed himself in his Villainy: And this could be with no other view than to cast a Stain upon his Relations, for the Dead is beyond the Reach of Malice. How charitable or just this is, to endeavour to fix a Stain on the Innocent; and how unlikely that a Clergyman of the reverend the Ordinary's Character should be guilty of it, I need not say.

THE unfortunate Man has, as to this World, made Attonement for his Crimes; may the Memory of them die with him, and let us who stand not be severe in our Reflections on them who have fallen. To condemn and punish is the Province of the Law; to pity and bewail the Misguided the Character of the humane Christian. Let none depend too much on his own Virtue and Fortitude, since we have Examples of Men of Distinction, who, by play, have been driven to despair; and forgetting

ing what their Birth exacted of them have suffered the same ignominious Death as the unhappy Luke Ryley experienced. A Man, whom few Months since could not have been thought capable of perpetrating the Crimes which brought on his sad Catastrophe.

AS to the following Letters, I have only this to say; that notwithstanding the Request, that his L---p's contains, 'tis very plain he could not (and he as good as says so) hope it would procure his Interest to save him; consequently, it was written, as he informs his Friend, to divert a melancholp Hour, and was intended as a Satyr not only on wicked M---rs, but on a foolish People, who groaning under, suffer them to perpetrate, their Crimes, without taking any legal Method to put an End to the Oppression which is the Subject of their daily Complaints. Adieu.

Your humble Servant,

The Editor.

which I desire you will not and doubtless



Others.

To Mr. T. B.

My good Friend,

I AM satisfied, from the Experience I have had of your Worth, you will, so far from deserting me, in my unhappy Circumstances, do, whatever lies in your Power to deliver me from this Place of Horror, more terrible than even the Stroke of Death; but justly apprehend all Endeavours of that Nature vain.

It is in the above Confidence, that without Apology, I send the enclosed;
B which,

which, I desire, you will seal and deliver as directed. It is possible, that Reflection may have the same Effect on him, it had on the good-natured *Dido*, and the having himself been in, pretty near, the same Situation, prevail on him to succour Others.

Me quoque, per multos, similis Fortuna

For I myself, ^{labores} like you, have been distressed,
Factatam, hac demum voluit consistere

'Till Fate ^{Terra.} afforded me this Place of Rest,
Non Ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.
Like you an Alien in a Land unknown
I learn to pity Woes, so like my own.

If you find him averse from copying this Humanity, give yourself no Trouble in Solicitation. As to Life itself, I am not over anxious, my great Concern is that of my Family, which justly fears, from the ~~Interest~~ of the Publick, that the Ignominy of my Death will be a Stain upon them: Though, if we rightly consider, 'tis not the Punishment, but the Crime that casts the Blemish; and

as that is not be remedied, they ought to make themselves easy ; for, should I obtain a Pardon, it would not efface the Stain, which will be for ever indelible, and make my future Life a Hell upon Earth ; or, possibly, impatient of Reflection and Insults, bring me, at length, with the additional Weight of Blood upon my Head, to the shameful End, to which I am now doom'd ; or to be my own Executioner. To speak out, on second Thoughts, it is better to quit the World than live in it with Infamy and without Affluence.

REPROACH is the Lot of the poor Villain. The rich one, by his Power, Figure, and the Terror of the Laws, which punish Detractors, stops the Mouth of (what would be termed) Calumny ; and the very Persons whom his Crimes have beggared, will not dare to reflect upon his Character ; though, worse than that of the meanest Pickpocket : fearing Prosecutions for Defamation, or possibly *Scan.* *Mag.* History tells us, That Men

have been raised to Titles, by practising Vices directly the Reverse of the Virtues mentioned in the Preamble of their Patents. But this is digressing.

You will see that in the inclosed the Arguments I have employed are very unlikely to gain me the Favour and Protection of the Person to whom I write; however, they diverted a melancholy Hour, eased my Spleen, and may convince you that I have a thorough contempt of Death. To wish I had died without Infamy, is to no Purpose; Fate denied me that Happiness, and I submit to the Manner in which, that directs me to pay the Debt of Nature, which we all owe, and must as certainly discharge.

I HAVE said my Arguments are not likely to move Compassion; but I should have excepted the one I mentioned above, his own narrow Escape. This, and his Actions having ever been such

as

as none could account for (set aside his particular Interest) made me imagine the MAN might, to act up to his Character, appear in my Behalf. I may farther add, I had some Dependence (tho' very little) on his Good Nature. This Virtue his Enemies allow him; nay, they, who condemn him as a M-----r, extol him in his private Capacity. I have heard Men lavish in his Praise, as a private Gentleman, who endeavoured to have him lepp'd as a ^{public} P-----k T-----f.

But, my good Friend, let us laugh at and despise a World, which, I am leaving, but in which you may possibly be doomed to toil and scramble some, or many, Years longer. I say *scramble*; for what is it less. The Poor scramble for Bread, and the Great for *Titles, Admiration, Respect, Applause, &c. &c. &c.* in which, pursuit they are more, much more, foolish than they who scramble for the Necessaries of Life; these afford-
ing

ing Comfort, those only the Food of Vanity. The Latter essential to our Support, the former only the vain Breath of depending Sycophants, who, Friends in Prosperity, would prove the first to desert and condemn their Patron in Adversity.

INDEED, my good Friend, Men, Beasts, Fish and Birds, differ only in Form and Disguise. Cunning is given us, Teeth and Claws to them; we have the Art to appear what we are not, and by that Means make our Prey of the less Subtle, as they by their Strength, on the Weaker of their respective Elements. There are, by the wise Decrees of Providence, some Species destined for the Support of others of the same Nature, whether Fish or Fowl, &c. as we may suppose by their being defenceless. Thus to guard the Great there are Laws (among Men) to subject the Poor, who are defenceless, to support them in their Pride and Luxury,
by

by making the Latter Slaves to their Passions. This is not the immediate Decree of all-wise Providence, but the Consequence of Cunning, and the Abuse of Free-Will.

We may, like Fools, eccho the Words of the *Great*, and boast the Impartiality of the Law, but let any one show me that they ever could make Head against the Powerful. Nay, they have applauded and protected Men, whom they would have hanged, had those very Men been unsuccessful. Look into the History of *Henry* the VIth and of *Edward* the IVth; see how they veered; as the one or other was victorious or unfortunate, so did they declare both lawful Kings and traytorous Usurpers, in their Turn. I allow the Laws are founded on Wisdom; but they are under the Influence of Power, and the wisest Monarch may, by being deceived, make choice of Judges, who may be corrupt enough to pervert them, for
their

their own Interest, by gratifying the Passion of a P---me M----- and Favourite, in either condemning the Innocent or acquitting the Guilty. I speak not with regard to myself; though let me ask, if I had been as powerful as the Man to whom I have directed the enclosed, who would have dared to have attacked me? Who of the ***** have granted a Warrant to take me though impeach'd, not of robbing a few Particulars but the whole Nation,

Excuse me, my good Friend, it is a Sort of conversing, this writing to our Intimates, and while I am thus employed, my Eyes are diverted from the Horrors of the Cell to which I am confined: But not to purchase my own Ease by your Pain, I will conclude with assuring you I am extremely indifferent as to Life or Death, but while I live,

From my Cell in Newgate,
Tuesday October 2, 1744.

Sincerely Yours,

Luke Rley.

To the Arch-Pl-----r of Great-B-----n.

My L--d,

I AM encouraged to make this Address to Your L-----p, from the near Affinity of many Circumstances in our respective Lives ; which, I hope, will not only plead my Excuse, but engage Your L-----p's Compassion and Interest. I am aware that your L-----p, after I have enumerated these resembling Incidents and Actions, will retort upon me the trite Maxim, that

*The little Villain must submit to Fate,
That Great Ones may enjoy the World in
State.*

but, my L---d, if the Doctrine of Intention may be allowed, I may, with great Justice say, in my own Behalf, that had my Power been equal to my Inclinations, I would have done my

C

Country

Country as much Damage as it received from Your L-----p's ever-memorable *Administration*; that is, I should have been as consummate a ***** as Your L-----p, Your P-----rs or even Your *Sucessors* have, by the Advantage of Opportunity, proved themselves: Consequently, according to the above Doctrine, have better deserved a T---le and P-----n then merited a Halter; to which I am now doom'd, and from which I hope Your L-----p's Interest will rescue me; as I have shewn that I am not included in the above Maxim, by my being, intentionally, as wicked as the greatest, and that the Fault of my not being actually so, is rather to be ascribed to my unlucky Stars in denying me those Means, of being conspicuous, which Fortune has often lavish'd on others, less worthy of her Favours, by not making right use of them, than to my want of Inclination. I hope Your L-----p will not take what I have said as a Reflection
on

on Your A-----n, by the Public Voice allowing that Your Suc-----r has eclipsed You in the great Mischiefs he has done his Country, in the, as yet, infant State of his Power. No, my L--d, we know he could not have made the Havock he has done, had not Your L---p and Your worthy P-----rs paved the Way; had You not given him Courage to pursue the Schemes Your L-----p had laid, by tying up the Hands of the People with penal Laws, and stopping their Mouths, by Your Prosecutions; or making their Complaints uselefs, by barring all Access to the Th---ne, in which latter every one must, and does acknowledge, he only copy's Your L-----p's Policy. It is therefore to Your L-----p and to Your P-----rs that he owes the certain Dependance upon Impunity, which animates him to pursue, your L----p's Views of universal R---n to his Country; tho', to throw Dust in our Eyes, that we may not perceive he builds upon Your L--p's

Plan, he has chosen to attain to the same End, by a different Method. This, my L--d, may be deemed ungrateful; but is visibly the Effect of Vanity. Your L-----p already enjoys a prodigious Fund of Fame, and his owning Your L-----'s Policy the Basis on which he built, could add little to your exalted Character; though, the Concealment of it would contribute greatly to his own.

HENCE, my L--d, 'tis visible, I meant no Reflection on Your L-----p from the general Opinion the World has of Your Suc---r. I had my Eye upon the Earls of *Pembroke*, *Godolphin*, and *Oxford*, who, with Power in their Hands to plunder the N---n, wanted the Capacity Your L-----p has shewn, and died poor. The Last, after the Helm was taken out of his Hand, was glad to accept a Pension from, and thus live upon the Charity of, his Daughter-in-law.

So

So dangerous an Example justly irritated the succeeding M----y and Your L-----p, and they rightly judged he ought, under the Character of a wicked M-----r, to be prosecuted for his Folly. I remember Your L-----p, then a Commoner, was very active and zealous in this Prosecution, and discovered as much Art as Warmth, when you argued against the Impunity of evil Counsellors. It is with Pleasure that I reflect on Your L-----p's Speech, when a Debate arose in the House upon that noble Earl's Answer to the Articles of his Impeachment, Your L-----p said that " You hoped the Earls endeavour-
 " ing to skreen himself behind the
 " Queen's Name, would avail him no-
 " thing ; that, indeed, 'tis a fundament-
 " al Maxim of our Constitution, that
 " Kings can do no Wrong : But that,
 " at the same time, 'tis no less certain
 " that Ministers of State are accounta-
 " ble

“ ble for their Actions; otherwise a
 “ P-----t would be but an empty
 “ Name; the Commons would have
 “ no Business in that Place, and the
 “ Government would be absolute and
 “ arbitrary.”

THIS, my L---d, was sufficient to
 blind the People to the real Motives
 of the E---l's Prosecution; and Your
 Proceedings sufficient to deter such, as
 could penetrate them, from following
 the destructive Example of his Con-
 duct, if ever they were invested with
 his Power: But my L---d, your Poli-
 cy went much farther, and was imper-
 ceptible to many of, even, keen Sight.
 Your L---p had then an Eye on that
 Power, to which You afterwards attain-
 ed, and of which You designed to
 make, as the Prudence of your Con-
 duct has evinced, a very different use:
 Wherefore, Your L---p and Colleagues
 wisely considering, that if the Prose-
 cution

cution of the E---l as a wicked M---r was carried to Extremities; it might be an Example fatal to yourselves, managed with such Art, that it dropp'd to the Ground, while, in Appearance, the Warmth of Your Resentment was kept up. Your L---p's Diffimulation in this, was a Master-Stroke in Politics, as it imposed on, even, such of Your own Party as were not admitted the Knowledge of Your Secrets; being design'd only as Tools to Your Advancement, and to be contented with such Morfels as You should please to throw them.

THOUGH Fortune, my Lord, charm'd with Your Modesty and Perseverance, when she put you upon some Trials, was at length propitious to your Views, and many lucky Incidents concurr'd to Your rise, yet I am thoroughly satisfied it was more owing to Your refined Policy than to her Favours. But,
My

My L--d the Pleasure I find, when Your L---p is my Theme, makes me forget my present unhappy Situation ; of which, the Chape-Bell, this Minute, reminds me ; or, I might, wrapp'd in the Contemplation of Your L----'s Virtues, have forgot, that without Your L-----p's Interposition, the fatal Cord, will, on *Friday*, deprive You of an Admirer and humble Imitator, who, had Fortune favoured instead of depressing, might have defied the Halter : For,

My L---d, I am born a Gentleman, as was Your L-----p ; my Family made a Figure before my Birth, and is still considerable ; Your L----p's was also distinguished in the Time of Your Ancestors, and now shines with an amazing Lustre. Great Care was taken of my Education ; this was the same with Your L-----p ; I was of a heavy Ge-
nius .

nius and very flow of Comprehension;
 but made amends for this Misfortune
 by Affiduity; this was directly Your
 L-----p's Case, when at *Eaton*; I was
 always aspiring, and Your L-----p am-
 bitious; I had a natural Propensity to
 what was not my own, and Your L---p
 had as great an Inclination to pl-----r.
 I ran out the Fortune I had, Your
 L-----p mortgaged Yours, and was so
 low as not to have Credit for a Shoul-
 der of Mutton; Your L-----p began
 with low Pilfering, even that of a com-
 mon Ostler, and this was my Case,
 and when Your L-----p was prosecuted
 for a Lock or two of Hay, as You
 wanted Money and was obliged to sell
 Your Books, Your Bookfeller averred
 that sixteen Pounds was the full Worth
 of Your L-----p's Library, Severe
 Trial of Fortune, that Your L-----p's
 Credit could not stretch to such a tri-
 fling Sum with Your own Party, and
 that Your L-----p should set out with
 D robbing

robbing Horfes, who was deftin'd to
 pl---r Three Kingdoms! Your L---p
 had a lucky Turn, here we differ; I
 was unlucky enough to lofe, at Play,
 the Money I brought with me to this
 Country. However, here we reſemble
 again each other, though from different
 Cauſes; Power gave You an Opportuni-
 ty, which You did not let ſlip, to
 pl---r the Nation, and Neceſſity push-
 ed me on to the robbing all I met: But
 then here again we differ, in the Con-
 ſequences, Your L---p's P---n, ſet
 You above the Laws, and was reward-
 ed with a G---, and my petty Rob-
 berries have ſubjected me to the Seve-
 rity of them, and they are to be reward-
 ed with a Halter; tho' if Your L---p
 will, from a mature Conſideration of
 the Premifes, ſtretch forth a helping
 Hand, I hope to ſlip my Neck out of
 the Nooſe.

My L---d I have already mentioned the Doctrine of *Intention*; and hope it will have its Weight with Your L---p. I assure Your L---p my Views by far exceeded the narrow Limits of the Sphere in which I acted. My Design, in petty Robberies, was to raise a Strength, which might have enabled me to give a Scope to my aspiring Genius; when I had attained to the Power, I would have shewn, by my Conduct, that I deserved it, and that my descending to Street or Highway robbing was rather the Effect of Policy, than of Meanness of Spirit. No my L--d had not Fortune been my Enemy, I would have shewn myself second to none but Your L - - p or Your warlike S^{uccessor}, nay, my L--d, the unpenetrating *Many*, might possibly have deemed me the greatest **** of the Three, and thus have given me Prefe-

rance in the Rolls of Fame, notwithstanding ye have eclipsed the Honour of the great and memorable *Jonatban Wild*. I, my L---d, however extensive were my Views, conscious of, should have done justice, to Your superior Merit, and acknowledged myself but an humble Copyist of the bright and laudable Examples set by Your L---p and and Your illustrious Pre-----rs in Power, which will render Your Names immortal while there is any Spark of the generous Sense of their pristin Liberty, though but faintly glowing in the Breasts of *Britons*.

My Forces punishing by Fines and Bastinadoes such unthrifty Persons as bring Poverty upon themselves and Families, by keeping late Hours, and then throw the Blame upon the M-----rs, is no more than an humble Imitation of the

the famous Act for preventing T^{umul}ts
 and riotous A^{sembl}ies. My gathering a
 Body of Men to protect our Rapine,
 and ourselves from the Pursuit of the
 Plundered, the Civil Officers, and Laws,
 is but a Copy of Your L^{ord}'s S^{tan}-
^{ding} Army by the Awe which that im-
 pressed to be able, with Impunity, to
 act as was most conducive to your own
 Interest, however detrimental to that of
 the Nation. My levying Contribution
 Money, through all the Streets of this
 Metropolis, was following the Example
 Your L^{ord} had set me by the innu-
 merable Ways and Means invented to
 load and drain the People of the Fruits
 of their Labour and Industry. In a
 Word, my L^{ord}, Your L^{ord}'s Life
 was the noble Pattern I proposed to
 myself; which accounts for the near
 Resemblance of our Actions, and will
 I flatter myself be one Reason for af-
 fording

forſiding me Your Protection; another Motive, and I hope a prevailing one is my L---d Your having been Yourſelf, almoſt, as near the Scaffold, as I now am to the Gallows. Reflect my Lord on the Pangs You then felt, the Panic You were then in, and think what I ſuffer for being emulous of Your Character, to which I ſhould have approached much nearer, had Fortune allowed me to increaſe my Forces to a Strength ſufficient to have carried my Views into Execution, which would have ſpread far and wide the deſigned Deſolation.

YOUR L-----p eſcaped the Juſtice of Your Country by the Intervention of her E^{nem}-ies, and as ſhe has had few more eminently ſo, than Your L---p; that our Lives may bear a thorough Reſemblance, do you, by interpoſing, ſave me, that I may retire from publick Buſineſs

finest to enjoy at ease the Spoils of the
Industrious. *I am,*

My L---d,

From my Cell in
Newgate, Oct. 2,
1744.

Your L---p's

humble Imitator,

Admirer and

most obedient Servant,

Luke Ryley.

F I N I S.



Instructions. I am
pleased to enjoy at
the special

101-1

The only cell in
the prison, O. S.
1. 1. 1.

Family limited

Admission and

and of certain persons

John Ryley.

F. I. W. I. S.

